

February 17, 2017

To: Senator Catherine Osten, Co-chair Appropriations Committee

Senator Paul Formica, Co-chair Appropriations Committee

Representative Toni Walker, Co-chair Appropriations Committee

My name is Heather Gray, and I live in Berlin CT (06037). My husband and I are parents of three children, two of whom attend magnet schools. One of our children attends Two River Magnet High School in Hartford (grade 10) and another attends Two Rivers Magnet Middle School in East Hartford (grade 8).

Our children's education is important to us, because we believe that every child is unique and has the right to discover and grow in a safe and productive learning environment. We believe a strong education is essential not only to the future of our children but in how they will shape the communities and world we live in.

We chose a magnet school education for our children because these schools embrace diversity and sharing other cultures on a daily basis. At Two Rivers Magnet School, our children are encouraged to have a growth mindset so their unique talents and academic skills can always be improved with effort and hard-work. From our magnet schools we expect and have found: high academic excellence, opportunities for hands-on science discovery, enthusiastic teachers that incorporate real-world problems for the children to tackle, and creative technology based approaches to learning.

The environmental based theme at Two Rivers, along with STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), is woven into so many of the academic subjects and special activities ... our kids continue to learn how they can do their part to sustain our earth and become problem solvers. Our children are encouraged to express and discuss opinions while being respectful of other people's points of view. Magnet schools encourage children to do the right thing and make smart choices by thinking about not only of themselves but those around them and the world as a whole.

Two Rivers is reinforcing to our children that they are leaders who will be college/career ready so they can make a positive contribution. We are grateful that our children have the opportunity to attend and thrive at magnet schools!

I am very concerned about the lack of funding for magnet schools. I respectfully ask you to strongly support our children's schools and ensure that all magnet schools have the funding they need to be sustained into the future. I hope that you will support ALL students in Connecticut. I appreciate you taking the time to read my comments.

Thank you,

Heather Gray